

NEWS RELEASE



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San Diego, California***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - February 24, 2005

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that Salvador Villanueva was sentenced today in federal district court in San Diego for his role in smuggling counterfeit garment labels into the United States from Mexico. United States District Judge Thomas J. Whelan sentenced Villanueva to serve a term of 63 months in custody for trafficking in counterfeit goods. The sentence followed Villanueva's conviction by a jury in May 2004, for the charges of Conspiracy, Importation Contrary to Law, and Trafficking in Counterfeit Goods. The evidence presented at Villanueva's trial established that on May 10, 2002, defendant Villanueva entered the United States from Mexico with 25,000 counterfeit Tommy Hilfiger labels in the trunk of his vehicle.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Melanie K. Pierson, who prosecuted the case, Villanueva told agents that the labels were intended for his co-defendant in the Los Angeles area, who would provide them to individuals who would sew them onto jeans. Villanueva delivered four boxes of Levis and Guess labels to the co-defendant in Los Angeles, with agents watching. Samples of the seized labels were sent

to representatives of Levi Strauss, Guess, and Tommy Hilfiger, who confirmed that they were counterfeit.

United States Attorney Lam stated, “Counterfeiters should take note that their business carries huge risks, as the substantial sentence in this case demonstrates.”

Evidence at trial further established that Villanueva had provided 10,000 Versace labels on prior occasions. In addition to the custodial sentence, Judge Whelan ordered Villanueva to pay \$275,000 in restitution to Gianni Versace, S.p.A.

DEFENDANT **Criminal Case No. 02-CR-3103-W**

Salvador Villanueva

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Conspiracy, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371

Maximum Penalty: 5 years in custody, and/or \$250,000 fine

Importation Contrary to Law, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 545

Maximum Penalty: 5 years in custody, and/or \$250,000 fine

Trafficking in Counterfeit Goods, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2320

Maximum Penalty: 10 years in custody, and/or \$250,000 fine

AGENCY

Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Division of the Department of Homeland Security